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I. F. Stone's Weekly

VOL. X, NO. 20 MAY 21, 1962 WASHINGTON, D. C. 15 CENTS

Where Swarming Gnats Can Devour A Giant

In July of last year the President had a visitor who is not without experience in the Far East. He asked if he might be frank and, when told that he could, "proceeded" (according to the *New York Herald-Tribune,* July 26, 1961) "to give as frank a talk as the President has ever heard. Net of the talk: Keep U.S. troops off the mainland of Asia at all costs." The visitor was General MacArthur. If there were still an opposition in this country, instead of a numbed monolithic bipartisan, i.e., one party system, whenever there is a danger of war, this advice would be in the headlines and on the radio in the wake of our decision to land troops in Thailand close to the borders of Communist China. This is a first step into a vast marsh where swarming gnats can devour a giant.

The Fleet In The Wrong Gulf

If MacArthur had advised intervention and war, the whole country would have heard about it and it would be repeated today. Because he advised against intervention then in the perpetual Laotian crisis, few knew of it, fewer remember it. This disappearance of debate on such vital issues destroys the stabilizers of the ship of state, locks the country in not only with one man's decisions, but deprives even that one man, the President, of the greater flexibility made possible by the existence of alternative points of view in a free society. In this context, the phrase itself becomes rhetoric rather than reality. Indeed, viewed astringently from outside, we could not have picked a poorer time to act in Southeast Asia. The same President who can deploy 4,000 men and a vast naval armada across the Pacific to "defend freedom" hardly raised his voice on Capitol Hill in the literacy bill fight to defend a liberty so fundamental as the right to vote. The fleet should be in the Gulf of Mexico and the helicopters over Mississippi.

We have grown inured to our own hypocrisies. To bolster a dictatorship in Thailand in the same week that we can enforce neither majority rule in the Senate or minority rights in the South hardly advertises us abroad as champions of freedom. The repressive nature of Communism once it takes hold is lost to sight in our own inability to be what we claim we are. What we advertise as a rampart of freedom in the East is manned by four of the queerest figures ever smuggled under the Jeffersonian mantle—Pak in Korea, Chiang in Formosa, Diem in South Vietnam, Sarit in Thailand. Never did a rich concern acquire so many sure tax losses.

Self-depreciation marks every step of our way on a course that may be disastrous. As we write the morning paper headlines proclaim "Thailand Welcomes Arrival of 1800 American Marines." Already brushed under the rug in typical fashion was the queasy remark of Thailand's Interior Minister, Gen. Charusthien. For a moment in the late afternoon papers of the day before one could get a glimpse of the truth in his apologetic statement that "persons with old-fashioned ideas may not like the matter of foreign troops in Thailand, but there are times when a country has to depend on collective defense." Even in Thailand, where public opinion hardly exists under the repressive blanket, the Interior Minister finds it necessary to excuse the admission of U.S. troops. This is not the most auspicious circumstance under which to make our debut with combat forces on the mainland of Asia. But how many will notice this detail in the reassuring flurry stirred up as usual by U.S. "information agencies"? They sell folly with the same techniques that sell soap.

The truth is that there can be no peace in Southeast Asia and no stability unless this area on the southern borders of China is neutralized. The people of this otherwise blessed

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Cease-Fire? What Laos Needs Is A Cease-Retreat!

"Vientiane, May 11 (French Press Agency)—Americans and Laotians are not in agreement [on the reported fall of Houei-Sai on the Lai-Thai border to the Pathet Lao]. . . . The American spokesmen say they are not even sure that the Pathet Lao seek to occupy that locality. They say journalists can go there tomorrow by plane to see for themselves."

—Figaro (Paris) May 12-13 week-end issue.

"Houei-Sai, Laos, May 14 (AP)—Houei Sai was a ghost town today following a mass evacuation into Thai territory by government troops and civilians late last week. . . . Mayor Phouey Chatamga, back on an inspection tour of his town, said he believed the main body of pro-Communist forces was about 30 miles away. . . . The town itself apparently had never been occupied by the Reds. . . . The evacuation into Thailand was started by government troops last Wednesday and ran through Friday in what an eye-witness described as 'two days of hell'. . . ."

—AP reporter Tony Escoda, flown to Thai side by helicopter, crossed Mekong in home-made launch and filed this from the scene, Wash. Star, May 14.

"Houei Sai, Laos (AP)—May 15—Dishevelled Lao troops continued to flee through this border town into Thailand today even though no Communist forces have been sighted in the area for five days. Authoritative military sources [this means U.S.—IFS] said patrols have pushed well back over the line of retreat to discover the strength of Pathet Lao forces without coming into contact with the enemy. The Pathet Lao drive seems to have paused after chasing the Royal Laotian forces out of Nam Tha, 90 miles to the north."

—Washington Post, May 16.

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region, neither overpopulated nor underfed, need and want to be let alone. They need to be sealed off from the giant quarrel of China and America. China can no more help resisting our establishment of bases to her south than we could help resisting if Chinese military advisers were operating in Guatemala and Chinese combat troops were being placed in Nicaragua. We overthrew Arbenz and we wage economic war on Castro insisting that we have a right to make sure that the regimes among our smaller neighbors are to our liking, and under our influence. But we recognize no similar right on the part of China. Her neighbors, too, must be satisfactory to *us*. This is to make the Monroe Doctrine world-wide, as Mr. Kennedy's friend Henry Luce advocates and indeed as the Truman Doctrine of containment in 1947 was intended to imply. The whole world is to be *our* sphere of influence. This spells trouble with a capital P: world-wide dispersion of military forces, a constant increase in their size, a growing hatred for us wherever we are impelled to burn out resistance with napalm as in South Vietnam, an increasing militarization of our own society.

The Question of Sincerity

It should be clear by now that only neutralization can contain Communism in Southeast Asia. The one stable State in it with no Communist menace is Cambodia which has peaceful relations with both sides and ended insurgency by peaceful reform without undemocratic repression. But Cambodia, for some reason, is the country our bureaucrats, military and civilian, seem to hate most in the whole area. Cambodia's Prince Sihanouk is a man of elevated views, but our people in Asia prefer the corrupt clowns we have been supporting in Laos. *The New York Times* in an unbearably unctuous editorial (May 16) speaks as if the restoration of the cease-fire and the achievement of a coalition Laos regime as pledged by the Powers last year at Geneva were a test of Russian and Chinese sincerity. But it is our government which has seemed insincere since the beginning in this whole area.

There has been a strange contradiction in our policy since Dien Bien Phu. On the one hand, our military were opposed to a cease-fire between the French and Ho Chi-minh's forces. On the other hand, the Pentagon always gets cold feet when asked to intervene on its own. Those who go back and study the papers carefully will see this "let's you and him" fight posture which so rankled the French. It was a report by Gen. Ridgeway on the logistical difficulties, as the brass calls it, which swung the scales against U.S. military intervention in 1954 and our surly acquiescence in the Geneva settlement of that year. In the same way the present policy of seeking a way out by a coalition with the Communists in Laos was decided *before* Kennedy's inaugural when the Pentagon, on taking a close look after the collapse of "strong man" Phoumi Nosavan's drive northward in December 1960, decided that it didn't want to intervene. On January 3, 1961, there was one of those off the record briefings for Pentagon reporters which signalled the change. In the newspapers of Jan. 4, 1961, Pentagon reporters Jack Raymond in the *New York Times,* Mark Watson in the *Baltimore Sun* and Richard Fryklund in the *Washington Star* (with Hanson Baldwin chiming in two days later in the *New York Times*) all carried the same tune: that intervention in Laos was too difficult logistically (not enough roads, mostly trackless mountain and jungle) and also politically ("In Laos," Fryklund wrote, "there is no clear cut 38th parallel between the good guys and the bad guys. Our man, Prince Boun Oum, has little popular support. . . .") and anyway Laos was not important enough to either side to be worth a fight. It was at the Pentagon that the scales of policy were turned to the search for a coalition regime as a way out. It is not accidental that we are intervening in Thailand, not Laos, and talk of drawing a line only around the capital of Ventiane where a bend in the Mekong river makes defense easy from the Thai side. They blow hard, our military men.

The alternative to fighting is to negotiate. But here the windbags fill up again to bursting with the cry of "appeasement." The pattern has been to let the other Powers take the onus of negotiating and then surreptitiously try to upset the results. Dulles refused to attend the 1954 Geneva conference. We would not sign the settlement. We helped block the unifying free elections which were promised in Vietnam and established the Diem dictatorship instead. In Laos we tried our best to sabotage the 1954 agreement to reunite the two Northern provinces held by the Pathet Lao with the rest of the country by elections and by absorbing the Pathet Lao into the Royal Army. When elections were finally held and a coalition formed, we overthrew Souvanna Phouma, set up a dictatorship, threw the Leftists out of the Parliament, put the Pathet

Our Trustful Laotian Allies

"Mr. McNamara [U.S. Secretary of Defense] was told by American officers from Laos that the Laotian generals fled the battle scene this week in Northwestern Laos without notifying American military advisers who were trying to rally the defenders. . . .

"The Laotian government, it was reported to Mr. McNamara refuses to show military maps to the American advisers or tell them where troops are deployed."

—Washington Star, Sunday, May 13, main story, "Kennedy Draws Line in Laos" by Richard Fryklund, its Pentagon reporter.

Even Visiting U. S. Defense Secretary McNamara Not Told Truth in Vietnam

"Five hundred Vietnamese Communist guerrillas have been deployed in the area of the resettlement project known as Operation Sunrise. Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara visited the area Wednesday. . . . The Communists made their presence felt on the same afternoon that Mr. McNamara inspected Ben Tuong, the first settlement of Operation Sunrise. They ambushed a convoy of the 7th Regiment, killing 6 soldiers. Five soldiers were captured. The Communists seized two American submachine guns, six rifles and two carbines.

"The incident occurred at noon on the main road to Saigon. Mr. McNamara passed over this area about five hours later in a U.S. Army helicopter. HE WAS TOLD NOTHING OF THE INCIDENT DURING AN EXTENSIVE BRIEFING at Ben Tuong, although the settlement was only 8 miles from the scene of the ambush. The Vietnamese assured Mr. McNamara that the highway was now unmolested."

—Homer Bigart from Saigon, New York Times, May 13.

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Lao troops into concentration camps and sent their leader Prince Souphanou Vong to prison on trumped up charges of treason. The troops and the Prince escaped and resumed the rebellion. Then in August, 1960, a brave young parachute captain, Kong Le, disgusted with the corruption our aid program had brought the Laotian military and rich, revolted and put Souvanna Phouma back into power.

The Highest Paid Army In Asia

Again we upset coalition talks and encouraged Phoumi Nosavan to revolt. It is important to remember that the Russian supplies which turned the tide only began to come in after Nosavan's relative, Marshal Sarit, the dictator of Thailand, bombarded Ventiane with mortar fire from the Thai side and shut off all supplies to the Laotian capital, which depends on oil and other goods shipped up the Thai side of the Mekong. It was then that Souvanna Phouma appealed to Moscow for help. Our military and CIA men, by their intrigues against Souvanna Phouma thus opened the gates to the supplies that overwhelmed that phoney "strong man" of theirs, Phoumi Nosavan and that no good army of his, which we made the highest paid in Asia but which turned out to be the least willing to fight.

Again, in recent months, *Le Monde* of Paris and *The Times* of London have reported that our military and the CIA were encouraging Phoumi Nasavan to hold out against a new coalition regime even while the U.S. Embassy at Vientiane was urging him to go in. This may seem a familiar problem to us but it may well have looked like a double-faced policy to Moscow and Peking. Even our papers indicate that the truce was broken in the North after Phoumi despite U.S. warnings built up his troops in Nam Tha in violation of the cease-fire. In a statement in Paris which *Le Monde* carried (May 11) but which I did not see in our press, Souvanna Phouma claimed that the Royal forces, not the Pathet Lao, began the attack at Nam Tha. Now we can't get our heroes to stop running.

Operation Sunrise Unappreciated

"At the [Ben Tuong] settlement, 40 miles north of Saigon, Mr. McNamara saw the first results of Operation Sunrise, which seeks to pacify and secure rural areas. He decided to support the project to the fullest when he first heard of it in Hawaii in February.

"Operation Sunrise involves rounding up and resettling hundreds of families in areas previously controlled by the Communist guerrillas. Most of these families must be forcibly removed by Government troops, who burn the dwellings to prevent their use by the Communist guerrillas, known as the Viet Cong. The U.S. has made funds available to compensate the families.

"In the thatched briefing hut, Mr. McNamara asked: 'What has been the reaction of the resettled families?' 'At first unhappy,' Col. Nguyen Duc Thang, commander of the 5th Division admitted."

—Homer Bigart from Saigon, N. Y. Times, May 10.

A Vivid Picture of An Independent Minded U. S. Newsman's Troubles in Vietnam

"Saigon, South Vietnam—At 4 p.m. on March 23, I was summoned to appear before the director general of the Dept. of Information, Republic of South Vietnam. Such summons are always unpleasant. Departments of Information, of course, never handle information. They exist for the correction of mental aberrations that afflict foreign correspondents.

"Wondering where my copy had been found repellent, I stopped first at the shop of Dang Duc Khoi, who is a special press adviser to the President. Khoi is a Buddhist, but he seems more attuned to reality than most Christians here. 'Have I been naughty?', I asked Khoi. 'Will they throw me out?' Khoi assured me that my stories were jewels of objectivity. Suspecting perhaps that my intimations of deportation were based on wishful thinking, Khoi exhorted me to banish such thoughts. Besides the Director General would never dare try to oust me. Here he was wrong.

"The heat was terrible that day and I was sweaty and fretful when I mounted the stairs to the Office of Truth. The Director General had just returned from a symposium on 'The Free Press in India' and in consequence his mannerisms seemed more saccharine than usual. But he came to the point quickly.

"'I have to inform you,' he purred, "that a decree for your expulsion has been signed by the Minister of Interior. You must leave by plane tomorrow.'

"'Thank you for giving me so much advance notice,' I replied.

"He evidently thought I would beg for time. Finally he asked whether I wanted a few extra days to pack. He said he might be able to swing it. But there is a limit to self-degradation and I gag at asking favors from information directors. 'It's up to you to say when I must leave', I told him. I asked the reason for my expulsion. He said he did not have the decree handy (I was never able to see it) but he would call Interior and find out. He phoned someone and then said: 'You have spread false information which is considered to be tendentious and against the government and people of Vietnam.'

"'I have been expelled from only one other country—Communist Hungary,' I told the Director General. 'We are in a state of national emergency,' he replied. . . .

"Returning to Saigon late Saturday, I was informed by Khoi that it was all a mistake. I could stay. There had been an error in the translation of one of my stories. (Officially there is no censorship, but cable copy is read by information people who sometimes relay transmission or even refuse to let some stories go out.) . . .

"This is one explanation. Ambassador Nolting has heard another—that my stories tended to pessimism and failed to reflect much enthusiasm for the government. The palace had marked me as anti-regime and stooges were combing my copy to seize upon some excuse for expulsion.

"Sully [Francois Sully of Newsweek, another correspondent served with an expulsion order at the same time] was never told his offense. At Sully's request, none of the correspondents here wrote about the deportation orders.

"Besides, how do you write a story about yourself in The New York Times? In the third person? And what category would it fall in? News? Analysis? Talker? Or should it detonate a Blockbuster? Anyhow I regarded my reprieve with mixed feelings. This has not been a happy assignment.

"Saigon is a nice place to spend a few days in. The food and wine are good, the city is attractive, most hotels and restaurants are air-conditioned. But to work here is peculiarly depressing. Too often correspondents are regarded by the American mission as tools of foreign policy [exactly as Washington correspondents are regarded by the State Department—IFS]. Those who balk are apt to find it a bit lonely [ditto Washington—IFS], for they are likely to be distrusted and shunned by American and Vietnamese officials. I am sick of it. . . ."

—Homer Bigart in the New York Times house organ.

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Two Labor Racket Decisions Cast A Dim Light on Pending Contempt Appeals

Two appeals arising from the McClellan investigation of labor racketeering were decided by the Supreme Court last Monday, but its newest member, Mr. Justice Byron White, took no part in either so they threw no light on what his attitude will be. Since the Court has been divided 5-4 in favor of broad Congressional powers of investigation, the new appointee might turn the scales.

The two cases were those of the ex-Teamster leader, Dave Beck, and Maurice Hutcheson of the Carpenters. Neither involved the issues coming up in the pending contempt appeals from the Un-American and Internal Security committees. They are interesting only as revealing those basic visceral reactions which so often are the hidden propellants of judicial rationalization. Mr. Justice Frankfurter, who is ill, took no part in either decision.

Not An Impartial Grand Jury

Beck's case was decided 4-3. Warren, Black and Douglas felt that he had a right to a new trial for grand larceny because the trial judge had made no explicit attempt to weed out of the grand jury which indicted him those who might have been prejudiced by the burst of unfavorable publicity he received from the McClellan committee. Clark decided against Beck, with the support of Harlan, Brennan and Stewart.

Mr. Justice Black took no part in the Hutcheson case. It was decided against the union leader 4 to 2. He was held in contempt for refusing to answer questions about a jury fixing case for which he was being prosecuted in Indiana. If he had pleaded the Fifth, the fact could have been used against him in the State proceeding.

Another witness in the same proceeding found a way out by refusing to answer on the ground that questions about the jury fixing conspiracy were not "pertinent" and "might aid the prosecution on which I am under indictment." But when Hutcheson, on advice of the same lawyer, made the same plea, he was held in contempt.

Warren dissenting, with Douglas, was for reversal on the ground that the committee did not need the details of this crime to pass laws regulating union funds. Douglas, in a separate dissent, argued for reversal of the rule which holds invocation of the Fifth Amendment in a Federal proceeding may be used to convict a man in a State court.

Hutcheson claimed his was a case of exposure for exposure's sake. Harlan (with Clark and Stewart) for the Court rejected this plea on the ground that Congress has full power under the commerce clause to legislate in the field of labor-management relations. Harlan said this was different from that "indefinite and fluctuating delegation which permits a legislative committee 'in essence to define its own authority' " as the Court had said of the Un-American committee in the Watkins case.

Brennan in his concurring opinion pointed to the reasoning of Harlan as evidence that the Watkins decision against the un-Americans had not been overruled by the Barenblatt Braden and Wilkinson decisions. He said the majority ruling was evidence of "continued adherence" to the "vital principle" that "exposure for the sake of exposure is not legislative inquiry." Pending contempt cases will soon show whether Brennan was just grasping wistfully at a straw.

For Bertrand Russell's 90th Birthday

Only a few philosophers have left behind them some enduring fragrance in the garden of men's thoughts. Socrates and Marcus Aurelius, Giordano Bruno and Spinoza, inspire others across the centuries by some special quality of courage and devotion. But Bertrand Russell is the only philosopher we can think of who sought not only to teach but actually to lead mankind. The spectacle of an octogenarian philosopher speaking, marching, engaging in sit-downs, is as unique as the peril against which he is seeking to rouse the human race. The chains against which he urges struggle are subtler and stronger than man's impediments in the past. Not superstition or intolerance but habit, apathy, and respectability today lead mankind to move in locked step toward an abyss. He has even been willing—last full measure of an Englishman's devotion!—to risk appearing undignified in his efforts to awaken us from a kind of somnambulism. To speak with him is to feel his exhilirating combination of pessimism and hope, objectivity and involvement, despair and joy. His love shines in his countenance and in his preachment. The thoughtful and the uncorrupted everywhere are grateful to him for it, and hope he will be spared to lead us a goodly span longer.

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Second class postage paid at Washington, D. C.

I. F. Stone's Weekly. Second Class Postage Paid at Washington, D. C. Published every Monday except the last Monday in August and the first in September and the last Monday in December and the first in January at 5618 Nebraska Ave., N. W., Washington, D. C. An independent weekly published and edited by I. F. Stone; Circulation Manager, Esther M. Stone. Subscription: $5 in the U. S.; $6 in Canada; $10 elsewhere. Air Mail rates: $15 to Europe; $20 to Israel, Asia and Africa.

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